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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [FR](#) [PREM](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE RESERVED ON MEK REPATRIATION REVIEW PANEL

REF: STATE 30120

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Paul Mailhot for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

1, (C) We made reftel demarche February 22 to MFA
DAS-equivalent for the Middle East Antoine Sivan, urging that
the GOF support the formation of a panel drawn from
Baghdad-based diplomatic mission personnel to interview
repatriating MEK members to Iran. We emphasized the need for
this work to begin immediately, even though the ICRC had
suspended operations in Iraq. Sivan undertook to make our
demarche known to higher authorities at the Quai and to
consult with the French Embassy in Baghdad. As an initial
reaction to our proposal, however, Sivan said he had
reservations on two counts. First, he said, we would be
asking diplomatic mission personnel in Baghdad to perform
work for which they had no training or expertise. Second,
and more seriously, the panel would appear to supplant the
ICRC. Interviewing repatriating MEK members is work that the
ICRC should rightly be charged with, since it is the foremost
independent, impartial body for cases of this nature. We
seriously risked setting an unwanted precedent if we
substituted a panel of diplomats to do its work, Sivan said.

12. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
Leach